

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUCHAR 01773 111458Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-08
TRSE-00 OMB-01 AID-05 IO-13 /085 W
-----112239Z 125668 /73

R 111351Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2110
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION NATO
AMCON MUNICH

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, RO
SUBJ: CEAUSESCU PRESS CONFERENCE ON EARTHQUAKE
REF: BUCHAREST 1732

1. SUMMARY. ACCORDING TO SEVERAL JOURNALISTS PRESENT AT HIS MARCH 10 PRESS CONFERENCE, CEAUSESCU, ALTHOUGH SOMEWHAT FATIGUED, HANDLED HIMSELF WELL. MANY WERE IMPRESSED BY HIS OBVIOUS CONCERN FOR SITUATION, CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO INDEPENDENCE, AND DETERMINATION TO MAINTAIN AND EVEN EXPAND COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. CONFERENCE WAS CARRIED PRACTICALLY UNALTERED ON ROMANIAN TV SAME EVENING. END SUMMARY.

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2. INITIAL REPORTS FROM SOME OF THE OVER 200 JOURNALISTS (FOREIGN AND ROMANIAN) PRESENT AT PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU'S MARCH 10 PRESS CONFERENCE ARE THAT CEAUSESCU, ALTHOUGH OBVIOUSLY WEARY, HANDLED HIMSELF QUITE WELL. THIS WAS FIRST SUCH MEETING WITH ASSEMBLED FOREIGN PRESS WHICH WE CAN RECALL SINCE NOVEMBER 1974 VISIT OF SECRETARY KISSINGER HERE, AND LATTER WAS

ON MUCH SMALLER SCALE.

3. EVEN SEVERAL EXPERIENCED REPORTERS WHO CAME
PREPARED TO BE CRITICAL, E.G. VIKTOR MEIER OF
FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG AND PAUL HOFFMAN OF NY TIMES
SAY THEY WERE IMPRESSED BY APPARENT CONCERN AND COMPASSION WHICH
CEAUSESCU PROJECTED. OTHERS WERE IMPRESSED BY HIS
AGILITY IN DEFLECTING DELICATE QUESTIONS SUCH AS
THAT REGARDING PRESIDENT CARTER'S CONCERN FOR EASTERN
EUROPEAN HUMAN RIGHTS (REFTEL). COMMENT: THIS
QUESTION AND ANSWER WERE CARRIED ON ROMANIAN TV AND,
TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, IS FIRST DIRECT REFERENCE TO A
SPECIAL US INTEREST IN THIS SUBJECT WHICH WE HAVE
SEEN OR HEARD IN ROMANIAN MEDIA). CEAUSESCU ALSO
DEFTLY HANDLED QUESTION ON GOLDEN COLORADO
SEISMOLOGICAL CENTER REPORT GIVEN TO GOR BY US. HE
NOTED THAT EXCHANGE OF SUCH INFORMATION WAS NORMAL,
ALTHOUGH INTERPRETATIONS OF DATA MAY DIFFER AND
CRITICIZED SOME PRESS AGENCIES FOR THEIR EXAGGERATION
OR AMPLIFICATION OF REPORT. THOSE JOURNALISTS WE
HAVE TALKED TO WERE ALSO IMPRESSED BY CEAUSESCU'S
OBVIOUS DETERMINATION TO FULFILL AND EVEN SURPASS
CURRENT FIVE-YEAR PLAN GOALS, INCLUDING FOR CONSUMER GOODS,
AS WELL AS HIS CONSTANT REFRAIN THAT SUCH A RECOVERY COULD ONLY BE
DONE BY AN INDEPENDENT NATION.

4. CONFERENCE WAS LATER CARRIED ON ROMANIAN TV.
ONLY CHANGE WAS VOICING OVER OF QUESTIONS AND IN A
FEW CASES THE PRESIDENT'S ANSWERS, ALTHOUGH THEY
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WERE REPORTED IN FULL.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS CONFERENCES, EARTHQUAKES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 11-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BUCHAR01773
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770085-0150
Format: TEL
From: BUCHAREST
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770370/aaaacjth.tel
Line Count: 99
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d5dd3dba-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 BUCHAREST 1732
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3142775
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CEAUSESCU PRESS CONFERENCE ON EARTHQUAKE
TAGS: PINT, RO, (CEAUSESCU, NICOLAE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d5dd3dba-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009